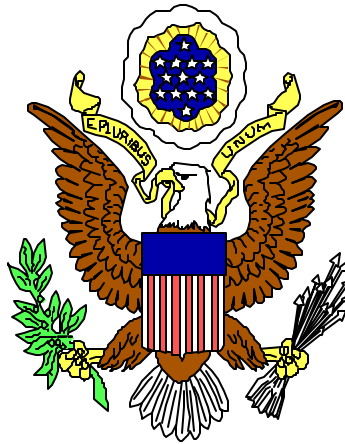


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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

***CIVIL PRO BONO PANEL***



Dedicated to Service  
Committed to Excellence

United States District Court  
For the District of Columbia  
Civil Pro Bono Panel  
3rd & Constitution Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001

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## THE CIVIL PRO BONO PANEL

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia Civil Pro Bono Panel is a voluntary group of attorneys dedicated to assisting the Court and litigants who do not have legal representation. Now in its eighth year of operation, the Panel is comprised of over 100 members, consisting of law firms and sole practitioners. In 1998, roughly 80 appointments of counsel were made. The cases were all civil cases, including a substantial number of cases emanating from the prison system and a large number of workplace disputes.

### How does it work?

In 1991, the Court appointed a committee on pro se litigation to oversee a Panel of attorneys who volunteered to represent indigent litigants. This committee is responsible for supervising the operation of the Panel, recruiting new members and reporting on Panel activity to the Court. Members of the Panel are appointed, in selected cases, to represent litigants who have been granted *in forma pauperis* status. See generally, Local Civil Rule 83.11 (formerly Local Rule 702.1).

### How does the judge decide to appoint counsel?

Appointing counsel is within the discretion of the judge, taking into account:

- \* the litigant's financial affidavit;
- \* the complexity of the case;
- \* the potential merit of the claims;
- \* the ability of the litigant to secure counsel independently;
- \* the degree to which the interests of justice will be served by appointment; and
- \* any other factor the judge deems appropriate.

Local Civil Rule 83.11(a)(4)(B)(formerly 702.1(a)(4)(B)).

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### **What happens next?**

When a judge determines appointment is appropriate, the Clerk's Office will make the appointment from the Panel. The Clerk's Office will make the file available to the appointed attorney who then has thirty days to accept or withdraw from appointment pursuant to Local Civil Rule 83.11(a)(7)(A)(formerly Rule 702.1(a)(7)(A)). The provisional appointment order will indicate the scope of the appointment. Upon acceptance, the attorney must notify the client and opposing party of his/her appearance.

### **What happens if counsel withdraws?**

Withdrawing counsel is obligated to return all materials to the Court and to file the notice of withdrawal. It is left to the discretion of the judge whether or not to repeat the appointment process.

### **How many cases does each Panel member take?**

Each Panel member can designate how many cases he/she is willing to accept on a yearly basis, what types of cases he/she is most qualified to handle, and any other relevant information. This information will be used when appointing counsel.

### **What about expenses?**

The Pro Se Committee oversees the operation of the Indigent Civil Litigation Fund, a not-for-profit corporation created to reimburse Panel members for expenses incurred during the representation of their appointed clients. Additionally, there is a program under which court reporters will provide their services to Panel members free of charge.

**Application for Civil Pro Bono Panel**

<b>Name</b> _____	<b>Number of cases willing to accept per year:</b> _____
<b>Law Firm:</b> _____ <b>(Contact:</b> _____ <b>)</b>	<b>Type of cases qualified to accept:</b>
<b>Address:</b> _____	_____ <b>Prisoner's rights</b>
_____	_____ <b>Employment dispute</b>
_____	_____ <b>FOIA</b>
	_____ <b>Social Security</b>
<b>Phone:</b> _____	_____ <b>42 USC § 1983</b>
<b>Fax:</b> _____	_____ <b>Other</b>
	<b>Language capability?</b> _____

**I certify that I am a member in good standing of the Bar of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, or that I am in compliance with Rule 702(b) of the Rules of this Court.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Please return to Clerk of Court, U.S. District Court for D.C., 3rd & Constitution, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. For further information, please contact the Court's Pro Se Unit at (202) 354-3370.**